Scheme for Promotion of Women's Cooperatives in Gujarat

3996. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govemment are implementing any Central Scheme for promoting Women's Cooperatives in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the funds released to Women's Cooperatives in the State during the last three years; year-wise; and

(d) the results achieved thereform?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Govemment of India has been implementing Central Sector Scheme, "Assistance to Women's Cooperatives" since 1993-94 throughout the country including Gujarat. The scheme aims at bringing about improvement in the socio-economic status of women by providing assured work through cooperative societies undertaking activities in agro-based/ commercial/industrial flelds enabling them to augment their income.

(c) The funds released are as indicated below:—

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Amount
1995-96	Nil
1996-97	Nil
1997-98	3.52
TOTAL:	3.52

(d) It is too early to evaluate the scheme. However, the assisted primary women cooperative societies are expected to increase their business activities.

Cotton Producing Area in the Country

3997. SHRI CO. POULOSE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cotton producing area in the country has been shrinking during the last five years;

(b) if so, the area under cotton crop during these years;

(c) the reasons for this shrinkage; and

(d) the steps Govemment propose to take to ensure restoration of cotton producing area in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The area under cotton in the country during the last five years has been consistently increasing except in 1997-98. The year-wise cotton area is given below:—

(In lakh hectares)

Year	Area
1993-94	73.21
1994-95	78.71
1995-96	90.35
1996-97	91.22
1997-98	87.43

(c) The shrinkage of cotton area during 1997-98 is mainly attributed to delayed onset of South West monsoon in 1997 and deficient rains in parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

(d) The government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme viz. Intensive Cotton Development Programme (ICDP) in 11 major cotton growing States with the basic objective to increase production and productivity of cotton.

Modernisation of Agriculture

3998. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan to modernise the agriculture so that crops dependence on nature and vagaries of weather-playing havoc with the agriculture could be gradually eliminated;

(b) whether our Research and Development capabilities for agriculture are being further reoriented in this direction;

(c) whether efforts are being made for simple credit facilites to farmers; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof so that recent fanners' suicide syndrome should not repeat?